

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, as amended, remain pending herein.

1. Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Applicants have amended claims 1-11 to particularly point out and distinctly claim the applicants' invention. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

2. Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (a), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hitachi Metals JP 2002-326881 (hereinafter JP '881).

Applicants discovered, *inter alia*, a method of manufacturing a cordierite porous body including providing cordierite forming materials including an Al source, an Si source, and an Mg source, and firing the materials to form cordierite, wherein the Al source is at least partially provided by inorganic micro balloons containing Al_2O_3 , and the Si source is at least partially provided by inorganic micro balloons containing SiO_2 , wherein a moisture content of the inorganic micro balloons is 0.1% by mass or less.

JP '881 does not disclose, teach, or suggest any specific moisture content, let alone a moisture content of the inorganic micro balloons of 0.1% by mass or less. Instead, JP '881 teaches a loss of ignition, for which the lowest amount is 0.1 percent.

In addition, applicants discovered a method of manufacturing a cordierite porous body, wherein the inorganic micro balloons are obtained by calcining at 300°C or more (see applicants'

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claim 4). JP '881 does not disclose, teach or suggest inorganic micro balloons obtained by calcining at 300°C or more.

Thus, JP '881 does not disclose, teach or suggest all elements of applicants' claimed invention and therefore is not a proper basis for a rejection under § 102. Further, there is no disclosure in JP '881 which would have suggested the applicants' claimed invention to anyone of ordinary skill in the art.

Accordingly, claims 1-11 are patentable over JP '881, and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection, and allowance of all of those claims.

3. Claims 1-8, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), over Inoue U.S. Patents 4, 871,693 and 4,698,317.

Inoue does not disclose, teach or suggest a method of manufacturing a cordierite porous body including providing inorganic micro balloons containing Al_2O_3 and SiO_2 , wherein a moisture content of the inorganic micro balloons is 0.1% by mass or less. Instead, Inoue, teaches spheres of glass cordierite containing MgO. Thus, Inoue is directed to a different field of endeavor and does not disclose, teach or suggest all elements of applicant's claimed invention and therefore is not a proper basis for a rejection under §102. Further, there is no disclosure in Inoue which would have suggested the applicants' claimed invention to anyone of ordinary skill in the art. Accordingly, claims 1-8, 10 and 11 are patentable over Inoue, and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection, and allowance of all of those claims.

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This application is now fully in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. The PTO is hereby authorized to charge/credit any fee deficiencies or overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-4293 (Order No. 28953.7272). If further amendments would place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is invited to call applicants' undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger W. Parkhurst", written in a cursive style.

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Date: July 12, 2006

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RWP/GPM:mn1